State of Sales in 2016

Linked **in** Sales Solutions

INTRODUCTION

In today's competitive sales environment, sales teams want tools and tactics that give them an edge in closing deals. The *"State of Sales in 2016"* survey highlights the strategies that sales organizations use to gain deeper insights and build stronger relationships with prospects and customers. Among the key findings, the survey focuses on the value that top-performing salespeople place on sales technology to grow their business and close more deals.
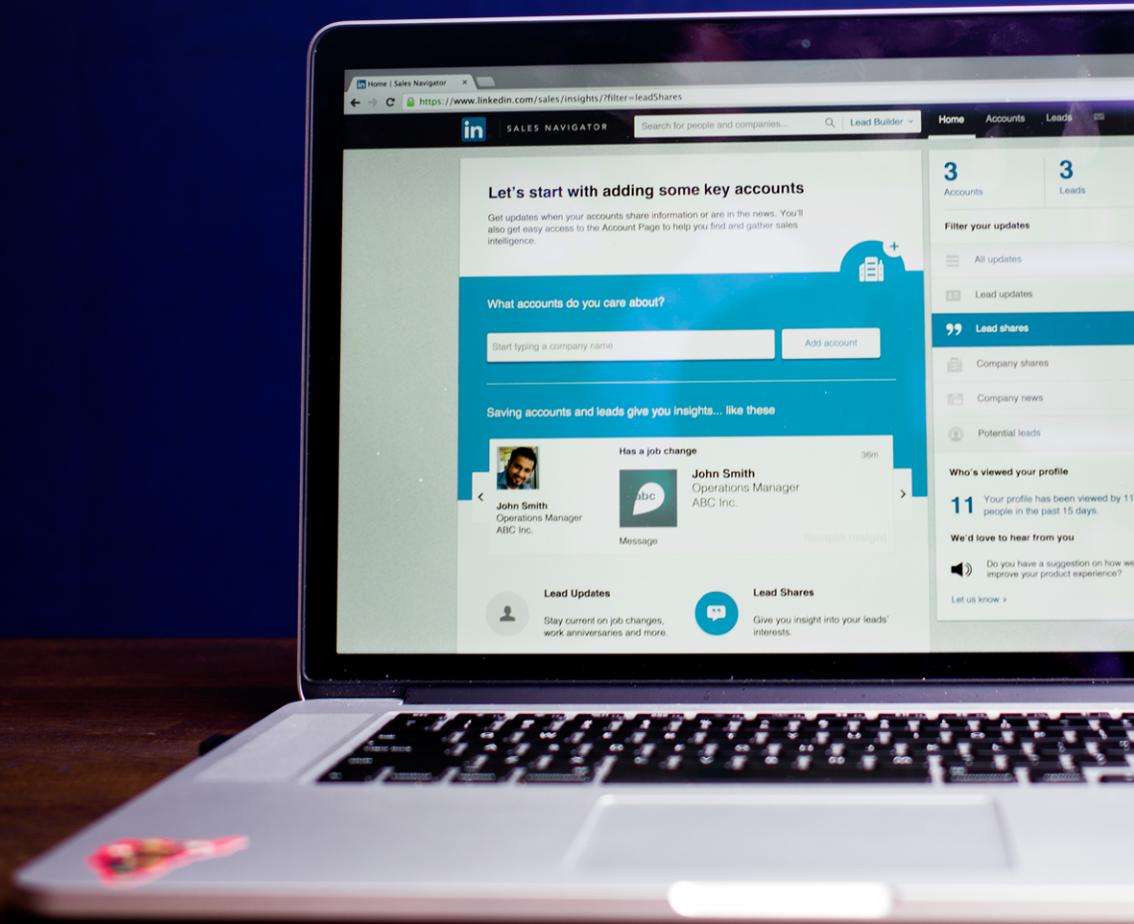
FAST FACTS

Salespeople are relying on a variety of sales technologies to grow revenue, close deals and build stronger relationships.

1. Sales professionals spend the most time using **social selling tools and CRM** — and believe both deliver the highest value.

2. More than 70 percent of sales professionals use **social selling tools**, including LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, making them the most widely used sales technology. Specifically, sales professionals see relationship building tools as having the highest impact on revenue.

3. Ninety percent of **top salespeople** use social selling tools, compared with 71 percent of overall sales professionals.

4. **Millennials** are 33 percent more likely to use sales intelligence tools, which generate background and contact information on leads, than industry peers aged 35-54.

Sales Teams Invest in a *"New Sales Stack"* of Technology

Key finding: Sales professionals spend the most time using social selling tools and CRM — and believe they deliver the highest value.

Technology is becoming more embedded in our professional lives. Employees are working from smartphones on their commute, communicating with colleagues via video conferencing and editing documents in real time with colleagues across the country.

While sales technology has traditionally been limited to CRM, organizations are embracing a new *"stack"* that is made up of a broader suite of digital tools used to close more deals and grow their revenue. Email tracking tools, productivity apps, and sales intelligence software have gained significant traction among sales professionals. Most notably, social selling tools — tools used to build and nurture relationships with prospects and customers by leveraging professional social networks — are viewed as highly effective and are widely used, especially among high-performers.

While social selling tools are the most widely used, sales professionals spend more of their time using CRM tools. One-third of CRM users spend three to five hours using CRM tools, and 24 percent spend more than ten hours per week.

Hours Spent With Each Tool

CRM: One-third (33 percent) of CRM users spend 3-5 hours per week using CRM tools. Almost one quarter (24 percent) spend more than 10 hours per week using CRM tools.

Sales intelligence: One-third (33 percent) of sales intelligence tool users spend 3-5 hours per week using these tools.

Social selling: 28 percent spend 3-5 hours per week using social selling tools, while 20.9 percent spend 5-10 hours per week.

Productivity apps: One-third (30 percent) of productivity app users spend 3-5 hours per week using these tools.

Email tracking: 26 percent of email tracking tool users spend 3-5 hours per week using these tools.

Social selling: Employees at large companies (62 percent) were more likely to strongly agree that social selling enables them to build stronger, more authentic relationships with customers and prospects.

Strongly Agree	62%
Other	38%

Email tracking: Inside sales professionals (62 percent) and account managers (59 percent) were most likely to rate email tracking tools as either *"critical"* or *"extremely critical"* to their ability to close deals.

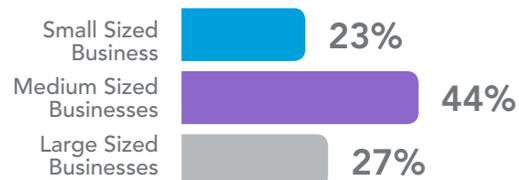|	
Inside Sales	62%
Account Managers	59%

Productivity apps: Mid-sized businesses are also more likely to use productivity apps (Box or Dropbox) — 64 percent vs. approximately 50 percent at small or large companies.

Medium Sized Businesses	64%
Other	36%

Sales intelligence: Business development professionals used sales intelligence tools at about a **17 percent higher rate than any other job function surveyed.**

CRM: 44 percent of employees at medium-sized companies (100-999 employees) use CRM tools in comparison to only 23 percent of employees of small companies (under 100 employees) and 27 percent at large companies.

Small Sized Business	23%
Medium Sized Businesses	44%
Large Sized Businesses	27%

Other sales technology such as email tracking, productivity apps and sales intelligence tools are an important part of the sales stack, even though a majority of salespeople spend less time using them. This isn't necessarily reflective of the overall value these tools provide, considering that some tools inherently involve more time-consuming data-entry. Sales professionals of varying demographics tend to prefer one tool over another.

Companies are hopping on board with the tech revolution and will continue to invest more in the new sales stack. About one-third of companies anticipate spending more money on sales technology this year.

Social Selling is an Indispensable Part of the Sales Toolkit

Key finding: More than 70 percent of sales professionals use social selling tools, including LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, making them the most widely used sales technology. Specifically, sales professionals see relationship building tools as having the highest impact on revenue.
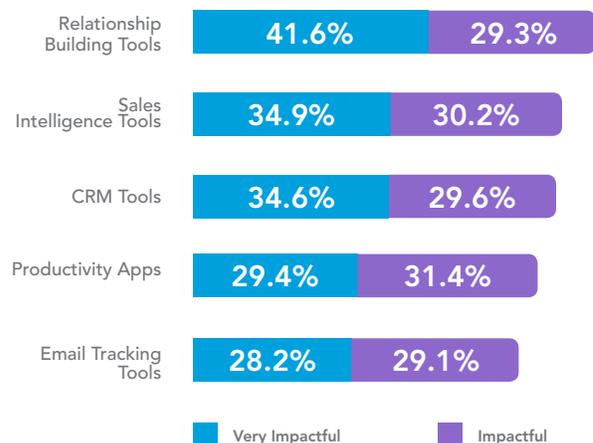
Today, building relationships by providing value from the first interaction is a requirement for winning new business. As marketers turn to software to generate more qualified leads, sales organizations have begun to recognize the value of technology to create human connection at scale. In fact, salespeople cite the ability to build stronger relationships with prospects and customers, and the ability to close more deals and generate more revenue as the top two benefits of sales technology.

It's prime time for social selling. Salespeople who excel at social selling create more opportunities and are 51 percent more likely to hit quota. Top sales professionals rely on social networking to create lasting business relationships both online and offline, and ultimately, to close more deals.

Salespeople view social selling tools as their most impactful sales technology for growing revenue and closing deals: Seven in 10 sales professionals cite social selling tools as *"very impactful"* or *"impactful"* on their ability to grow revenue. More than eight in 10 sales professionals cite social selling tools as *"important"* or *"very important"* for closing deals.

Companies are also investing more in social selling, making it a key part of their sales strategy. A majority of salespeople say their companies use social selling as a strategy for closing more deals.

Thinking about the various types of sales technology, how impactful are they on your ability to grow revenues?

	Very Impactful	Impactful
Relationship Building Tools	41.6%	29.3%
Sales Intelligence Tools	34.9%	30.2%
CRM Tools	34.6%	29.6%
Productivity Apps	29.4%	31.4%
Email Tracking Tools	28.2%	29.1%

# Top Salespeople Cite Sales Technology as Key to Their Success

Key finding: Ninety percent of top salespeople use social selling tools, compared with 71 percent of overall sales professionals.

What differentiates top salespeople and average performers? One of the key factors is their use of sales technology. Salespeople who have risen to the top of their field are frequent users of sales intelligence and social selling tools. Seventy-seven percent of top salespeople rely on sales intelligence tools, compared with 52 percent of overall sales professionals.

Plus, top salespeople are 24 percent more likely to attribute their success to sales technology: 82 percent of top salespeople cite sales tools as *"critical"* to their ability to close deals, compared with 66 percent overall. They cite sales technology in general as key to their success, as well as specific tools. 76 percent of top sales performers cite social selling tools as *"critical"* or *"extremely critical"* to their ability to close deals.

Top Salespeople Value Sales Technology

Legend: ■ Top Salespeople   ■ Overall

Categories: CRM, Productivity Apps, Email Tracking, Social Selling, Sales Intelligence
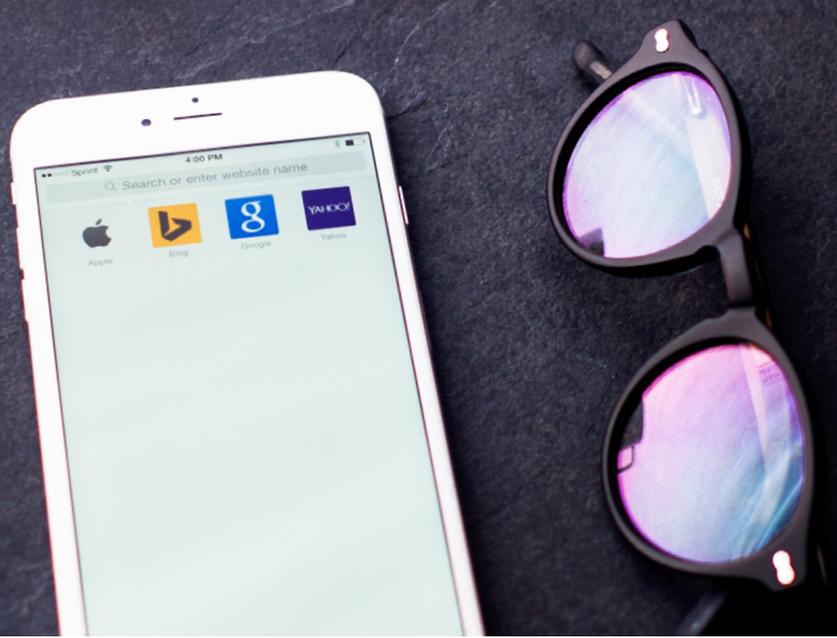
Millennials Encourage Teams to Adopt Sales Technology Early & Often

Key finding: Millennials are 33 percent more likely to use sales intelligence tools, which generate background and contact information on leads, than industry peers aged 35-54.

Technology adoption has become rampant among all sales professionals. From millennials to baby boomers, everyone is leveraging products that help them build and manage relationships in an effective and efficient way. While millennials are more likely to find new ways to do this, their counterparts, who tend to be decision-makers, are also investing in key tools and structuring their teams so they are positioned for greater impact.

Millennials dominate as the age group that uses every single sales technology most — CRM, sales intelligence, productivity apps, email tracking and social selling. A majority of millennial salespeople use sales intelligence tools (62 percent), productivity tools (52 percent) and social selling tools (78 percent) at higher rates than baby boomers. As millennials continue to introduce new technology to the sales team, they'll be equipped to work more efficiently and focus on the deals that matter most.

Technology Use by Age Group

Legend: Millennials · Aged 35-54 · Baby Boomers (55+)
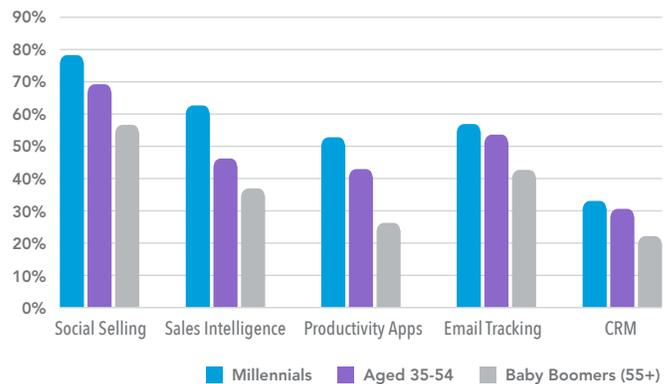
Millennials are also most likely to attribute value to social selling tools — 63 percent rate them as *"critical"* or *"extremely critical"* to their ability to close deals. In fact, 59 percent of millennials cite working for a company that provisions state-of-the-art technology as important to them when considering a job, according to PwC.

CONCLUSION

Sales success is closely tied to an organization's willingness to adopt sales intelligence and social tools. This trend will gain strength over time as more sales professionals across all generations continue to leverage products that help them to build and manage relationships. Sales professionals who've seen the impact of social, particularly top performers, will also *"spread the gospel"* to their colleagues.

Methodology

Market Cube, a research panel company, was commissioned by LinkedIn to conduct an online survey of 1,017 sales or business development professionals in the United States. All participants completed the survey from December 21, 2015 to January 12, 2016.

They were invited to take the survey via an email invitation. Panel respondents were incented to participate via the panel's established points program. There were two screeners for the survey to determine eligibility.

All participants were 18 years of age or older and work in a customer-facing and revenue-generating sales or business development position.

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